

# Eastern versus Western Cue Bids

By Neil H. Timm

In the game of contract bridge, there are all types of cue bids. It is a bid in a suit in which the bidder does not want to play which either asks or provides information to his partner by agreement. They are used for many purposes:

- (1) Show first or second round controls in slam bidding
- (2) Show a two-suited hand
- (3) Show an invitational/strong raise over interference
- (4) Show a stopper
- (5) Ask for a stopper
- (6) Create a force

Never pass a cue bid because you do not remember what it means!

In this tip I will review Western and Eastern cue bids, the Western cue bid is used to ask for information and the Eastern cue bid is used to give/tell partner something when trying to establish whether or not 3NT is a safe contract in a competitive auction. To see how they are used we consider some examples.

North	South	East	West
1♣	1♠	2♣	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♠*	

\*A 3-level cue bid that ASKS for a partial stopper in the suit bid – If Yes bid 3NT.

North	South	East	West
1♣	1♦	1♥	1♠
2♣	Pass	2♠*	

\*A 2-level cue bid that SHOWS a stopper with diamonds covered and says bid 3NT with a partial stopper in spades. Note the opponents have bid two suits.

North	South	East	West
1♣	1♦	1♠	2♥
3♣	Pass	3♥*	

\*A 3-level cue bid that SHOWS a stopper with diamonds covered and says bid 3NT with a partial stopper in hearts. Note that the opponents have again bid two suits.

North	South	East	West
1♣	1♦	3♣	Pass
3♦*			

\*Bid 3NT with a diamond STOPPER

North	South	East	West
1♣	1♠	2♣	2♦
2♠*			

Shows a Spade STOPPER and asks partner to bid 3NT with a diamond stopper

Tip: A 2-level bid shows/tells and 3-level bid may ask/tell depending on how many suits have been bid by the opponents. In general when the opponents have bid one suit a cue bid usually asks; however, if two suits have been bid a cue bid most often tells. There are exceptions, for example:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♣
3♦*	

\*Likely shows a STOPPER in an effort to get to 3NT; however, a cue bid at opener's first opportunity without suit agreement can be ambiguous. Since opener may have a fit for partner's suit, or may wish to ask for a stopper holding a solid suit.

You hold ♠AK2 ♥A7 ♦109 ♣AKQ1078

North (You)	South	East	West
1♣	1♦	3♣	Pass
3♦*			

\* Western cue bid, bid 3NT with a diamond stopper.

You hold ♠A92 ♥A7 ♦87 ♣AKJ1078

North (You)	South	East	West
1♣	1♠	2♣	2♦
2♠*			

\*Eastern cue bid, shows a Spade STOPPER and asks partner to bid 3NT with a diamond stopper

A cue bid followed by a new suit is absolutely 100% forcing!

You hold: ♠A ♥72 ♦A109876 ♣KQ102

North	South	East	West (You)
1♣	X	2♥	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦*

\*New suit after a cue bid is 100% forcing.

Most cue bids are not alerted, but some direct cue bids with unusual meaning are to be alerted.